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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 CONAKRY 000487

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: AD HOC COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS POSTPONING ELECTIONS
TO 2010

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¶1. (C) SUMMARY. On August 17, an Ad Hoc Committee formally recommended that Guinea postpone its elections to early 2010, stating that "it is impossible to hold elections in 2009." Although members of Les Forces Vives were dissatisfied with the decision and the way the recommendations were presented, they have ultimately agreed to accept the Committee's recommendation. CNDD President Moussa Dadis Camara played to the crowd, saying that he has always agreed to hold elections in 2009, but that the matter is essentially out of his hands. He will hold elections when the people tell him to hold elections. Embassy believes the previous timeline was technically feasible, despite claims to the contrary. Embassy is consulting with G8 partners to discuss a possible coordinated response. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) CNDD President Moussa Dadis Camara invited members of the diplomatic corps and Les Forces Vives to RTG, the national television/radio station, on August 17 to hear the Ad Hoc Committee on Elections formally present its findings. The Ambassadors of France, Spain, Russia, China, Japan, Libya, Senegal, Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, and ECOWAS were present as well as the Deputy Representative from UNDP. A/DCM attending on behalf of the USG.

BACKGROUND

¶3. (SBU) Dadis created the Ad Hoc Committee on August 14 at the bequest of Jean-Marie Dore, spokesperson for Les Forces Vives, and Rabiattou Diallo, union leader and President of Les Forces Vives (reftel). The decision was somewhat controversial among Forces Vives members, a number of whom felt the Committee was unnecessary. Headed by Anglican Archbishop Monsignor Albert Gomez as facilitator, the 22 members of the Committee include eleven members from Forces Vives, two from the CNDD, five from the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Political Affairs (MATAP), and four from the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI). The Committee was formally tasked with reviewing the continued viability of the election timeline established in March 2009.

ELECTIONS IMPOSSIBLE FOR 2009

¶4. (U) Monsignor Gomez outlined the Committee's findings, stating that its members had determined that "it is not possible to hold elections in 2009." The Committee noted the following issues as having contributed to the slow progress towards elections: a lack of vision on the part of various actors as to the duration and shape of the transition, the

delay in establishing the National Transition Council (CNT), the GoG's failure to release funds for elections, the subsequent delays for release of donor community funds linked to the GoG funding commitments, various issues associated with the voter registration process, and the lack of a formal decision about the registration of Guineans abroad.

¶5. (U) As such, the Ad Hoc Committee recommended adapting the current chronogram. Gomez proposed that the first round of presidential elections be held on January 31, the second round on February 14, and the legislative elections on March

¶26. The new chronogram specifies the following benchmarks:

- August: operationalization of the CNT
- September: adoption of results of the CNT's discussions
- October: publication of provisional electoral list
- November: corrections to the electoral list
- December: printing of voter cards
- January: distribution of voter cards

In addition, the Committee requested that the Guinean Government release its remaining tranche of election funds (between five and six million dollars) no later than August 20 and that the donor community ensure that the \$22 million administered through UNDP be available to the CENI no later than August 30.

ENTER THE DADIS SHOW

¶6. (U) Dadis, who had arrived 90 minutes late, then quietly began what ended up being a two and a half hour speech to the assembled group. Not surprisingly, he repeatedly emphasized

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how he has always been willing to follow the chronogram and hold elections in 2009. He admitted that the CNDD had initially proposed 2010, but upon hearing the demands of Les Forces Vives, he agreed to the 2009 timetable. Dadis stressed that only two CNDD members had been assigned to the Committee, which he described as deliberate restraint on his part to ensure neutrality.

¶7. (U) Looking over at the diplomatic corp, he said "I ask that the international community pay attention to what has been said in this room...I am an honest man and I have been true to my commitment...but now they are telling me 2010." Dadis also spent some time berating the assembly for having put him in such a shameful position by essentially encouraging him to commit to a 2009 timeline, but than making it necessary for him to go back on his word.

¶8. (U) As his speech dragged on, Dadis touched on many of his favorite themes: patriotism, ethnocentrism, imperialism, Guinea's history, his vision for Guinea's future, and his own strength of character. He danced around the subject of his own possible candidacy in the elections much as he has done in the past, giving no clear indication one way or the other except to say that he has said he will not run, but to remember that he is a citizen and enjoys the same rights as every other Guinean citizen. The audience responded with laughter several times when Dadis made a joke, but the overall applause seemed somewhat subdued relative to other Dadis displays.

¶9. (U) One particularly interesting rant involved Dadis' claim that he could have "easily" seized power at least three different times over the past few years, but that he chose not to because he is a patient man and unwilling to bring about bloodshed in Guinea. "People were telling me to take it and I could have done it, but I told them no, we must be patient. It is up to God," Dadis said. He repeatedly described himself as a man of wisdom and then, tongue in cheek, invited all of the assembled political leaders to come meet with him so he could share his wisdom with them. The audience laughed.

REACTION OF LES FORCES VIVES

¶10. (U) After Dadis finished his unprepared remarks, union leader Serah Rabiadou Diallo took the microphone. In careful, diplomatic language, she quietly criticized the proceeding, stating that while Les Forces Vives appreciated the invitation to the meeting, they would have preferred to have an opportunity to review and discuss the Committee's recommendations before they were publicly presented. This statement prompted a fifteen minute, largely nonsensical rant from Dadis. At that point, Jean-Marie Dore, spokesperson for Les Forces Vives then stood up and said "please excuse my colleague...she sometimes gets overexcited, but she means well and her head is in the right place; what she meant to say is thank you Mr. President for giving us this opportunity to hear the results with you because of course it is your prerogative to hear them first, as President of the Republic."

¶11. (U) The following day, August 18, Pol LES attended a meeting of Les Forces Vives, which had been called to discuss the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations. The discussion was heated with several political leaders (Alpha Conde, Cellou Diallo, Mouctar Diallo, and Francois Fall) expressing their disappointment over the fact that the Committee did not present their findings to Les Forces Vives before taking them to Dadis. They also were upset that the Committee had unilaterally adjusted the timeline into 2010 and decided to put presidential elections before legislative elections. Despite these criticisms, Les Forces Vives eventually agreed to accept the adjusted chronogram primarily because it seemed to already have been accepted by Dadis. However, the discussion was animated, with the meeting lasting most of the day.

COMMENT

¶12. (SBU) Embassy disagrees with the Committee's claims that the election timeline was no longer viable for 2009. On a technical level, it still would have been possible to organize at least one election in December, if not both. The timeline would have been tight, but doable. Furthermore, the CENI is fully aware of this fact due to the close collaboration between its members and the donor community.

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In order to head off the Committee's expected decision, the Spanish Ambassador (who is currently serving as the EU Chair in Guinea), attempted to have the G8 meet with the CENI President and the Secretary General of MATAP to lay down the facts. Unfortunately, the CENI President did not show up at all and the MATAP Secretary General was only there for a short period of time. Information from other sources suggests that the CENI is under considerable pressure and may have been manipulated (septel).

¶13. (C) The Committee's announcement plays right into Dadis' hands. He is now able to legitimately postpone the elections to 2010, but can pass the blame to Guinea's socio-political actors. Further delays are anticipated as several key elements of the adjusted chronogram may be difficult to push through according to schedule. For example, the new chronogram calls for the CNT to be officially launched in August and for its recommendations to be implemented in September. Both of these action items depend heavily on Dadis. If past experience is any indication, it is unrealistic to think that these benchmarks will be reached by the end of September. Interestingly, in his two and a half hours of discourse, Dadis made zero reference to the GoG's lengthy delay in disbursing long promised funds, a primary stumbling block highlighted by the Committee.

¶14. (C) Charge will be meeting with members of the G8 on

August 19 to discuss the international community's reactions to these latest developments as well as a possible plan of action. END COMMENT.
BROKENSIRE